



Separation & Divorce

Librarian Guide

Welcome, friends!

Thank you so much for choosing to build and lend this healing kit through your library. The creation and implementation of the kit are up to you, but we offer these recommendations and resources to assist you.

The Goal of the Kit

This kit will not completely heal a family. It cannot undo what has happened. Instead, it is intended to start families down a path of healing by:

- Offering a high quality book to share and empathize with
- Guided discussions to ensure everyone feels heard and knows what's happening
- Activities to integrate those discussions with play and other engagement

Together, all these pieces start families down a path of healing of their own design, a path that will be different for everyone. By offering this kit, you are not taking the place of a counselor. You are providing a curated set of resources designed by professionals to aid your community.

Who Created This Kit?

This kit was put together by a team of people, including:

- Bonnie Thomas, a licensed children's counselor specializing in art and play therapy
- Kirsten Cappy, a children's literature advocate and owner of Curious City
- Megan Emery, author, librarian, and library consultant

While the content of the kit was entirely the Healing Library team's instigation and creation, we would like to thank Barefoot Books and author Tamara Ellis Smith for sponsoring our work.



What is Our Vision of This Kit?

You may want to start by watching an “unboxing” of The Healing Library: Separation & Divorce at <https://youtu.be/gJz8ZegD3GI> to see the contents and learn more about the overall project. You can also find it by searching "Healing Library: Separation & Divorce: Unboxing" on YouTube.

In the picture book **Here and There** (Barefoot Books), Ivan moves between his mother and father's apartment after a family separation, carrying a blue backpack with a red pocket. A backpack like this is how we hope you will carry the mission of the Healing Library into your community. The contents of the backpack not only contain suggestions for discussing divorce and separation with a child, but book-themed activities that help parents be attentive to and present with their child.



From the picture book **Here and There** (Barefoot Books). Image © Evelyn Davididi

Here is what one can find inside this Healing Library Backpack:

- Picture book **Here and There** by Tamara Ellis Smith and illustrated by Evelyn Davididi (Barefoot Books)
- Ukulele and tuner
- Container of birdseed

THE HEALING LIBRARY: Separation & Divorce: Librarian Guide

Inspired by the book **HERE AND THERE** by Tamara Ellis Smith (Barefoot Books). Image © Evelyn Davididi

- Container with art supplies including a stapler, glue sticks, pencils, scissors, card stock, and paper clips for the activities
- Three-ring binder with "The Healing Library: Family Materials" showing in the viewer window. In that binder will be:
 - Parent Guide to Divorce and Separation, prepared by LCSW Bonnie Thomas
 - Book Discussion guide with page by page pointers for parents and discussion questions to engage their children
 - Guide to making a Here & There Journal to help children reconcile and acclimate the movement between two family places
 - Guide to Birding Here & There with birding tips and **Here and There**-themed bird seed packs for children's pockets
 - Ukulele playing suggestions and inspirations plus a song sheet from the book

What Does This PDF Provide for the Kit?

- Materials for you to assemble the kit:
 - Labels for the birdseed container, art supplies, journal, plus Healing Library "Luggage Tag" template for the backpack (Consider laminating these).
 - Image to decoupage onto the back of an ukulele
- Materials for the 3-ring binder:
 - Family Materials cover sheet for the binder
 - Parent Guide
 - Book Discussion Guide
 - Healing Activity: Here and There Journal
 - Intro
 - DIY Journal Labels
 - Journaling Prompts
 - Healing Activity: Birding Here & There
 - Intro
 - Pocketful of Birdseed Activity
 - Healing Activity: Making Music Here & There
 - Intro
 - Here and There Bird Song Lyrics



What Do We Suggest You Source for the Kit?

Here are suggested items to build a kit that is in sync with the mission and contents of the provided materials.

- Picture book **Here and There** by Tamara Ellis Smith and illustrated by Evelyn Daviddi (Barefoot Books): Hardcover ISBN: 9781782857419
- Backpack: We suggest a backpack whose interior is padded and 21" or taller to accommodate the ukulele. We selected a "Bodachel Travel Backpacks Women, Water Resistant Hiking Camping Rucksack Pack, Large School Laptop Backpack College Fits 15.6 inch, Casual Working Daypack Bag - Blue Red" Note: this backpack is not quite tall enough for the ukulele upright, but on an angle it fits perfectly.
<http://bit.ly/HLSDPack>
- Ukulele: We suggest a Diamond Head DU-102 Rainbow Soprano Ukulele - Red. Note: This uke only comes with a thin zippered case, but if your backpack is padded, the uke should be safe. <http://bit.ly/HLSDUke>
- Ukulele tuner <http://bit.ly/HLSDTuner>
- Birdseed and shatter-proof container
- Composition notebooks: These can be an addition to or a replacement for the DIY journal supplies
- Cardstock and regular paper for the DIY journal
- Stapler (loaded with staples), scissors, glue stick, pens and pencils
- 1" Three-ring binder: Best to have one with the clear view window
- Sheet protectors
- Your local resources for families in crisis

Kit Assembly Tips

Watching the “unboxing” video at <https://youtu.be/gJz8ZegD3GI> will give you some ideas for assembly. If you find yourself stumped or would like to make suggestions, please email us at thehealinglibraryus@gmail.com.

Kit Purchase

If this assembly process is simply something you do not have time for, The Healing Library team does offer completed kits for purchase at <https://www.thehealinglibraryus.com/shop>.

Lending Period

Ultimately, it’s up to you. Therapist Bonnie Thomas suggests families should be given 4 weeks with the kit to ensure effectiveness.

When the Kit is Returned

When the borrower returns the kit, the librarian should ask if there is anything more that the library can do to help. There is a lot of information included in the kit, which may leave the family with questions, new research to complete, or community partners to seek out. Even if they don't need any assistance upon returning the kit, it's a good idea to offer a gentle reminder that the library is there to help them should they need it.

Preparing the Kit for Next Patron

You May Need to Replace:

- Any materials in the binder that have been pulled out
- Birdseed
- Composition book and/or journal making supplies

Contact Us

Visit www.thehealinglibraryus.com for more Healing Library kits like this and grant language to help you build a case for funding the Healing Library.

Connect with Healing Library director Megan Emery at thehealinglibraryus@gmail.com to discuss this kit, create a new kit just for your library, and for training opportunities.

Subscribe to Healing Library updates by sending a message with the title "Subscribe" to thehealinglibraryus@gmail.com.

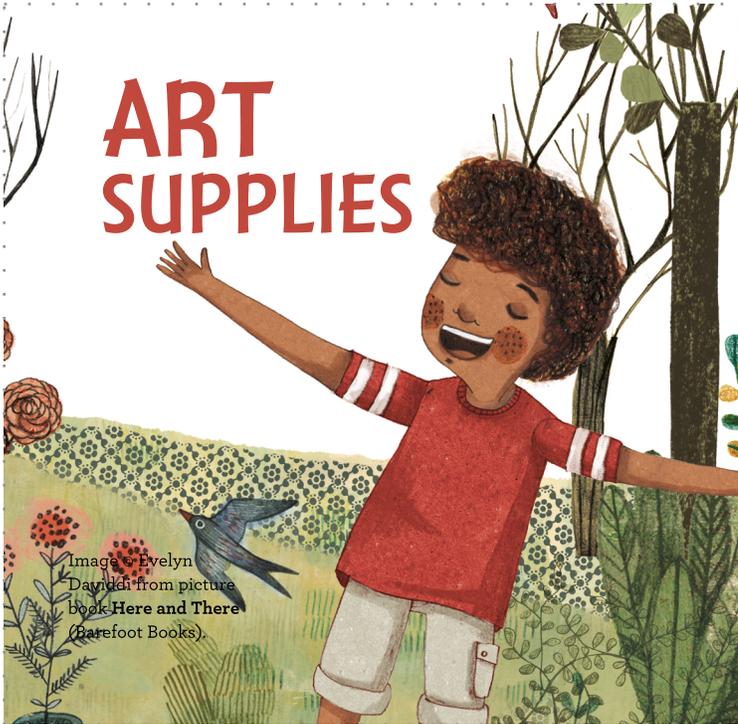
Tag Us

If you choose to share your Healing Library experience, consider using the hashtags **#TheHealingLibrary** and sharing that experience with The Healing Library team:

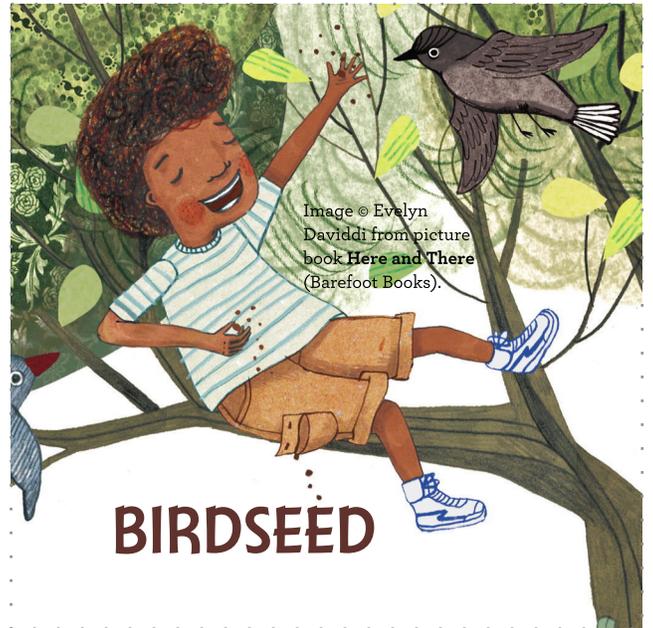
Twitter: @LibraryHealing

Facebook: facebook.com/TheHealingLibrary/

Labels for Kit



Label for Container of Art Supplies



Label for Container of Birdseed

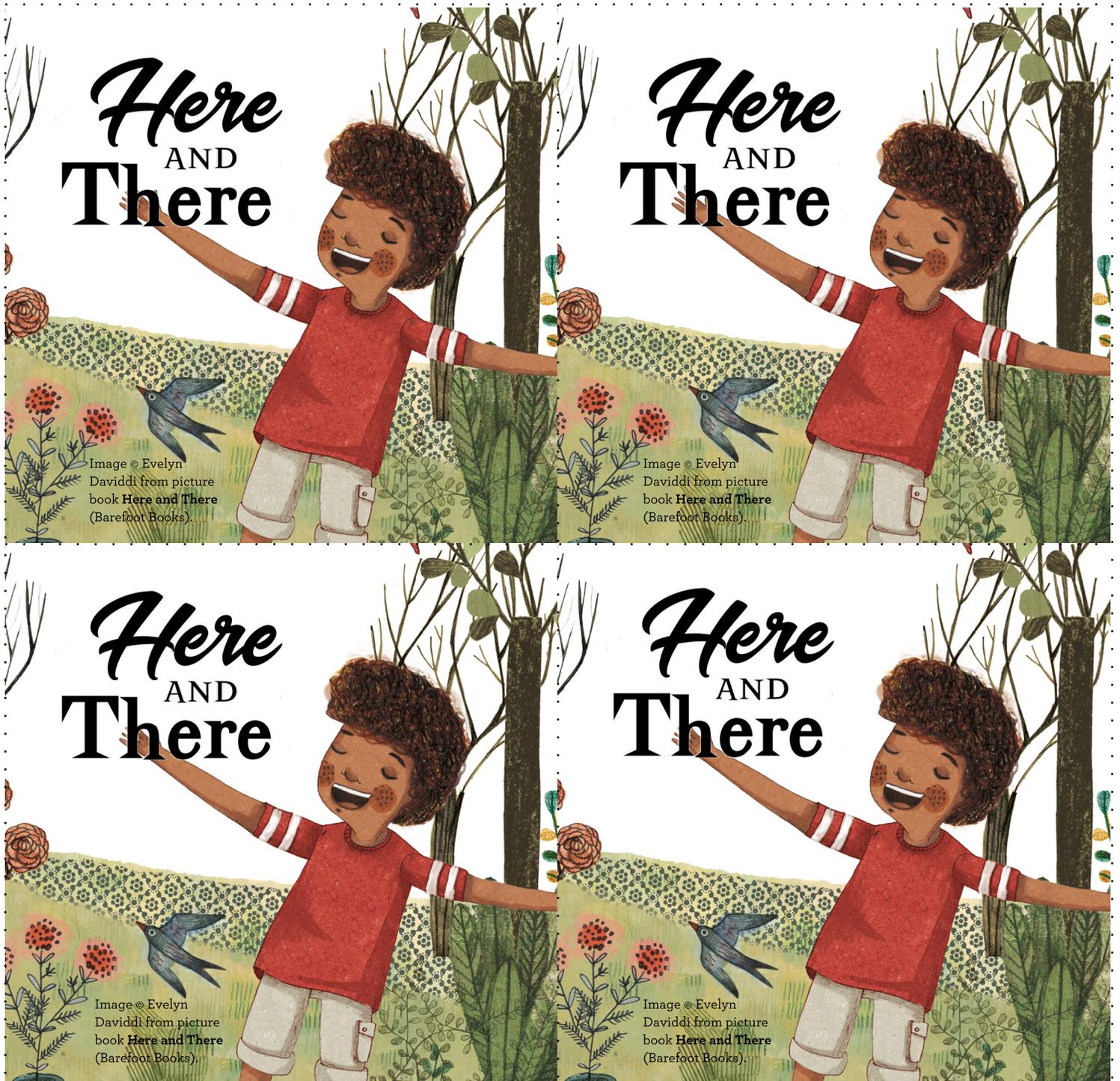
Separation & Divorce

Luggage Tag for Backpack

(Consider using this side for your barcode.)

Healing Activity: Here and There Journal Labels

Cut out one of these labels to transform any notebook or journal into a journal about "Here" and "There" and this period of adjustment from separation and divorce.



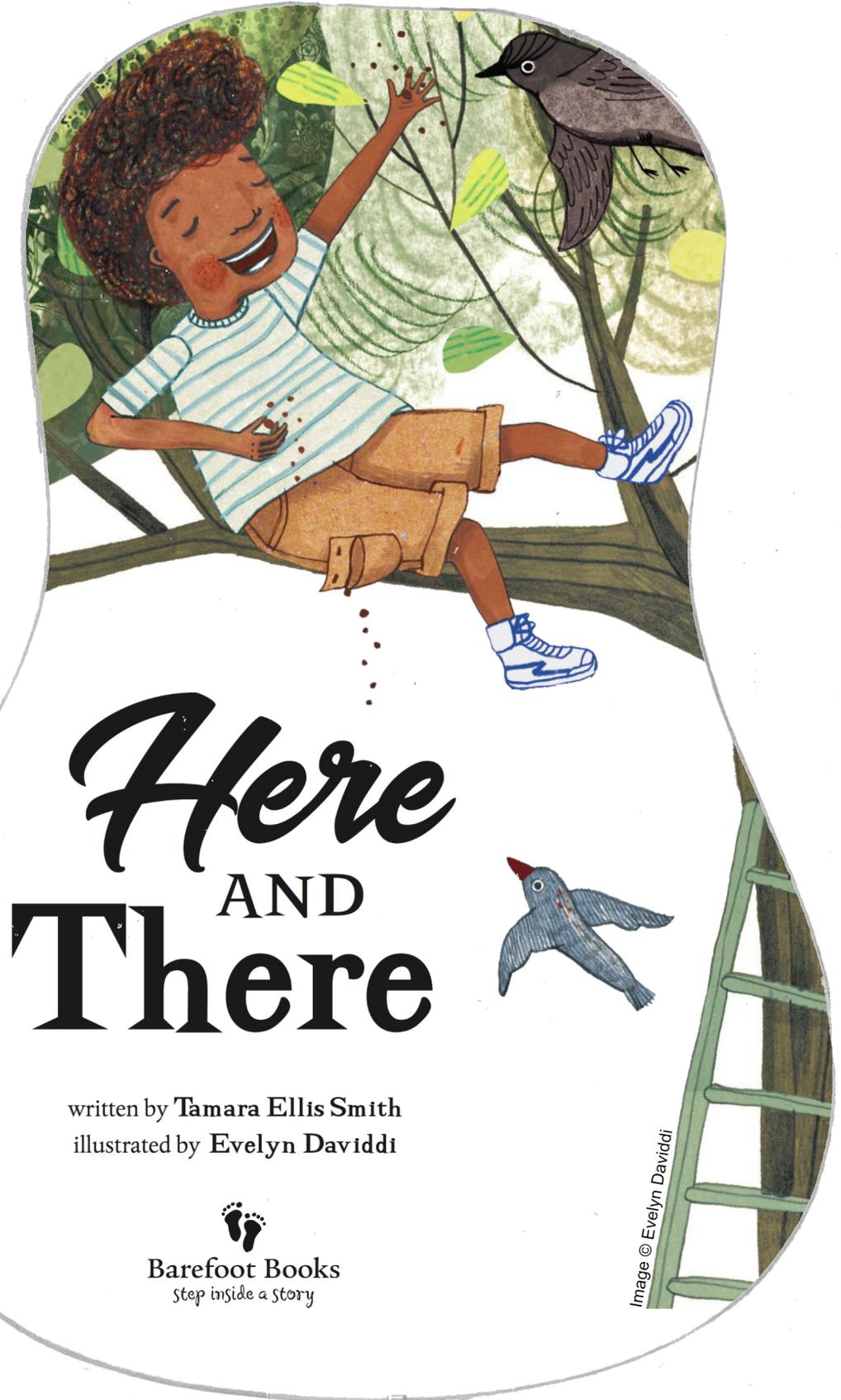
Ukulele Image to Decoupage

Consider having the ukulele in the kit connect visually with the featured book, **Here and There**.

This image should fit nicely on the back of a Diamond Head DU-102 Rainbow Soprano Ukulele.

Want to decoupage it with Mod Podge? Look to the web for best practices or:

- 1) Cut out the image.
- 2) Spread Mod Podge on the back of the cut-out and attach to the back of the uke.
- 3) Paint the front of the image and edges with Mod Podge to make the image durable.
- 4) If bubbles appear, very carefully press the air out with gentle fingers.





**THE
HEALING
LIBRARY**

Children's Books
Conversation
Community
Caring

Family Materials

Welcome, friends!

Is your family experiencing a separation or divorce? This Healing Library kit has been designed to help you and your child heal together during this period of change.

In addition to this Parent Guide, you will find a children's book with a companion discussion guide. You will also find book-themed activities designed for children experiencing a family

separation or divorce and companion supplies. This combination offers you an assortment of ways to move forward in a healthy manner.

A variety of art materials have been included that you're welcome to use for activities. All the paper materials in the notebook are yours to keep if you think they'll continue to be of use to you and your family.

The kit was assembled by a team of people that include a children's librarian, a licensed children's counselor specializing in art and play therapy, and a children's literature advocate.

Your family is unique. Therefore, each person will have their own way of adjusting and healing through the experience. This kit is designed to start your journey of healing, but not to complete it. You do not have to tackle this alone and can find resources to help you through your local library.

Thank you for taking this step in your healing process. We wish you peace.



Introduction for Parents

"Life Changing Experiences" and Adjustment

A life changing experience is one that disrupts your usual routine of life, such as moving to a new place, the death of a loved one, the birth of a child, a traumatic event, or separation/divorce. These life changing experiences may be planned or unplanned. They may be positive changes or unpleasant ones (or a mix of both). But all life changing moments have something in common — an adjustment phase. Adjustment is the process by which we adapt to a new situation. In the picture book **Here and There** (Barefoot Books) we meet Ivan in the early adjustment phase of his parents' separation.



From the picture book **Here and There** (Barefoot Books). Image © Evelyn Davididi

How Life Changing Experiences and Adjustment Impact Us

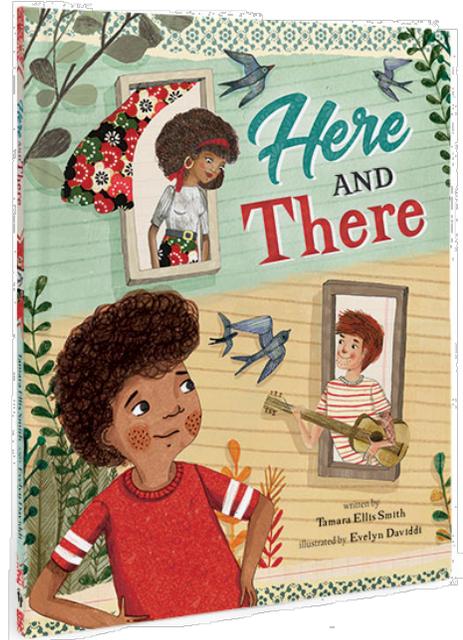
Adjustment requires the body to do a lot of work whether you're aware of it or not. The brain is creating new pathways that help you adapt to the "new normal." You're processing a range of emotions that might ping back and forth between "I will get through this" to "I can't handle this." Your body may be firing off chemicals (e.g., adrenaline) to help you manage the new stress level. You may notice a change in your sleep cycle or eating habits.

Put simply, adjustment can create various side effects. Some of the common side effects seen in children are changes in sleep, appetite, and behavior. Ivan's parents, for example,

notice that Ivan is unusually quiet and still during his adjustment. Ivan's dad also notices that Ivan is resistant to engaging in activities he had been interested in before.

What Parents May Notice About Their Children During Their Adjustment to Separation/Divorce:

- Range of emotions: Children may feel a multitude of emotions, sometimes all at once. These may include feeling sad, angry, numb, indifferent, happy, optimistic, pessimistic, rage, curious, hopeful, enveloped in grief, etc.
- Change in behavior: It is normal for children to experience regression in behavior when going through a life changing experience. Regression is when a person reverts back to coping strategies and behaviors from an earlier time in life. In children this might include more clinginess, bedwetting, speaking in a younger voice, and behavioral outbursts (tantrums). A child might also seem defiant or oppositional; they might stop doing things they used to enjoy doing; and their grades may drop a little (or a lot) at school.
- Change in sleep patterns: The child may have a harder time falling asleep or staying asleep. Younger children may ask to co-sleep with a parent. The child might have more vivid or upsetting dreams than usual.
- Change in eating habits: You may notice your child eating more or less than usual.



On the flip side, the child may exhibit positive changes in their behavior, or no change at all. Each child is unique and responds to change in their own way.

Supporting a Child Through an Adjustment

Here are some ways to support your child through a separation or divorce adjustment period:

- Reassurance: In the initial phases of a life change, children may need reassurance that this adjustment will eventually feel more “normal” and that you will all get through this together. Children may also ask the same questions over and over as a way to seek this reassurance. Consistent and patient responses such as, “Change is hard sometimes, and we will get through this as a family,” “I am here for you,” and “We will continue to be your parents no matter what,” can be comforting to a child.

- Routine: During this time it may help to stick to your usual routine as much as possible. If the child is used to dinner at 6, continue to have dinner at 6. If the child has basketball practice on Wednesday nights, continue this if possible. Once the child and parents have started to adjust to the separation/divorce, the routine can be re-negotiated if needed.
- Talk about it: See “Talking to children about separation and divorce” below.
- Read about it: Books like **Here and There** (Barefoot Books) provide an opportunity for you and your child to explore the topic of family separation and divorce through another’s experience. Ask your community librarian about other books on separation and divorce that you and your child can read together. See the “Here and There Book Discussion Guide” included in the notebook to learn how to use the book to spark discussions and to make observations about your child’s experience during this life changing time.
- Community helpers: Remind your child of the trusted adults and community helpers they can turn to for help when needed. These people may be family members, family friends, a counselor, school staff (guidance counselors, social workers, teachers), a coach, a member of the child’s religious or spiritual community, or a mentor. It can be helpful to inform your child’s guidance counselor and/or teacher at school that your child is going through a divorce or separation within the family. If the school has a support group for students going through the same experience, you may want to explore if this is a good option for your child to attend.
- Coping strategies: Remind your child of the coping strategies they can use when needed. Coping strategies can include talking to a trusted adult; taking a few breaths; affirmations and self talk (such as saying “I can adjust to new situations”); exercise; or spending time with a pet. You can even put together a “coping tool kit” for your child using a recycled gift bag or box, a change purse, or a cosmetics bag. Add various items to it, such as a stress ball; handwritten notes saying what you love about your child; an inspirational quote such as “We will get through this” signed by the parents and child; a small stuffed animal or figurine the child loves; a notepad and pen; and/or something to fidget with, such as a button or pebble. The “coping tool kit” can go from one parent’s home to the other, to a friend’s house, school, and anywhere else the child may need it.
- Be present: Set aside time to be with your child and give them your full attention. Put the phone down, turn the TV off, and/or put away distractions. Play a game, share a special snack, go for a walk, draw/color, etc. Choose a non-screen activity and be there for them.

Talking to Children About Separation and Divorce

Keep things simple and informative: For example, when telling your child about a separation/divorce you might say something like: “I have something important to talk to you about. Your mom/dad and I have decided not to be married/together/ a couple, etc. anymore. What this means is that our family will be going through some changes. Most importantly, however, we love you. We will always be your parents. And we will get through this as a family.”

“Titrate” the information. Once you’ve informed your children about the separation/divorce, they will likely have follow up questions. Answer their questions, but keep information simple and “titrate” what you tell them. Titration means you give smaller chunks of information to your child and allow them to process it at their own pace. You can do this by checking in now and then to see how they’re handling the information. While you talk to your child about separation/divorce, observe their body language — if your child is upset but still able to carry on a conversation and their body language is relatively calm, then the child is more likely to be in an okay frame of mind to continue.

If your child seems distressed, defiant, “checked out,” or inconsolable, then it’s time to take a break and take care of your child’s needs. Continue the discussion at another time.

Provide reassurance as needed. Here are some common things children need and want reassurance about after they’ve been told their parents are separating:

- That they are loved.
- That this is not their fault.
- That you and the other parent will be okay.
- That you and the other parent will have your own feelings about this as well; that the child may see either parent angry, quiet, tearful etc., and that it’s okay, and normal, for parents to have these feelings.
- That there are things you and the other parent can do to get help if needed.
- That even if you are upset at times, you will get through this. (This is a good time to point out the positive things you’re looking forward to as a result of the separation/divorce, i.e. “Change can be upsetting, but I’m looking forward to ...”).

Also, reassure your child that you want to answer their questions, but there may be things you cannot answer if it involves grown up situations. If that occurs, you can respond with statements like:

- “That’s for the grown ups to worry about and take care of.”

- “This is one of those things that is for grown ups to worry about—but I can hear and see that you’re worried about it too. We are working on this. You can trust that I am/we are taking your worries seriously.”
- “There are some things I cannot answer because the information is not mine to give. You can ask your mom/dad/parent about that.”
- “Sometimes parents have to keep grown up information private until kids are old enough to understand. This is one of those times. I will answer this question when you are older.”
- “I do not know the answer right now, but when I do, I’ll let you know.”

When/If One Parent is Moving Far Away

When one parent moves far away there are added adjustments to consider. The parent and child may be wondering how to maintain a connection and communication when there is physical distance between them. The child will still have a “Here” and “There” as in the book **Here and There** (Barefoot Books), but the transition back and forth will (most likely) be different in frequency and length of time at each home.

Here are some ways a parent and child can uphold routines and rituals to foster the parent/child relationship, even when “here” and “there” are far apart:

- **Shared journals:** A shared journal is one that is written by the child and shared with the parent and/or vice versa. These work well for children who do not have as much communication with a parent as they’d like—sometimes a parent and child live hours away or in different time zones. The child can use the journal to write whatever they want to share with the other parent. They can draw pictures about their day, write about what they are interested in, share their feelings about missing the parent, etc. Overall, the journal provides a place for the child to communicate with the parent, even in the parent’s absence. Depending on custodial agreements, the child can personally share that journal with the parent the next time they get together; the journal can be mailed to the other parent (the parent can then also write and draw in it and mail it back to the child); or it can be put aside for an appropriate time to share later in life. Shared journals can be a wonderful resource to have on hand during a separation/divorce. When your child is missing the other parent, it’s nice to have something within your control to offer the child for a way to communicate and connect with the other parent.
- **Read together:** Even when living far apart, parents can still read to their children. Phones, FaceTime, voice recording apps, and videotaping can be ways to read to your child even when you can’t physically be together. If you do not have access to these resources, talk to your local librarian to see if your community library can be of assistance.

- Regularly scheduled communication: Create a scheduled time to check in with your child each day or week (depending on the child’s age and their level of need). Phone conversations, “snail mail,” text, FaceTime, etc. can be used to stay in regular communication.
- Snail mail: Here are some special ways you could stay in touch with writing and mailing:
 - Write several handwritten notes and/or drawings and put them in individual envelopes. Mail them in one larger envelope to your child and tell them they can open one of the smaller envelopes whenever they’re missing you or need a mood boost. You can also mail them to the other parent for them to add to the child’s school lunch or snack now and then.
 - Send a care package containing kid friendly items such as letters, snacks, photos, small toys or trinkets, stickers, books, and more.
 - If you travel for your job, send postcards from the places you go.
 - Send a letter now and then— it doesn’t need to be elaborate—a simple “I love you lots” message in your handwriting can be a nice way to let them know they are loved and cherished no matter how much distance is between you.

Find new ways to play together: Here are some ways to play long distance:

- Write letters to each other in secret code.
- Borrow one of your child’s stuffed animals (with permission of course), and take photos of it in your home, place of employment, and/or community. See if the other parent will do the same. Your child can experience their own “Here” and/or “There” through these fun photos the parents have created.
- If your child is reading chapter books, have a parent/child book club where you both read the same books—on your own schedule—and then discuss it or do something fun related to the book next time you’re together. Alternatively, check in now and then and ask your child which of their favorite books you should read.
- Print out a coloring page, color half of it, then mail it to the child to finish.

Brainstorm and research other ways to be playful with your child long distance.

Drop-offs and Pick-ups

Part of the “new normal” for children of separated and divorced parents is the custodial exchange. This is when parents physically drop off or pick up their children from the other parent at an agreed upon location. In **Here and There** (Barefoot Books), Ivan’s parents do the custodial exchange at their own homes.

Custodial exchanges can be challenging and tiring for children even when they love both homes and parents equally. By the time the actual exchange has occurred, the child has dealt with such issues as: packing their bags, possibly leaving behind favorite clothing or toys that must stay at that parent's home; saying goodbye to any pets there; emotionally preparing to say goodbye to one parent, anticipating seeing the other parent; and switching gears to the routine, rules, and schedule at the other home.

By the time the actual moment arrives for the child to say goodbye to one parent and hello to the other, it's no wonder some will feel exhausted and/or emotional. In **Here and There** (Barefoot Books), we can see in Ivan's face and body language that the custodial exchange has an impact on him. Alternatively, some children will seem completely unaffected. Each child is unique and will respond in their own way.

However, here are some ways to help your child through the custodial exchange. Talk to your child ahead of time about ways to make the transition easier. Ask your child what s/he needs before, during, and after an exchange.

Considerations include:

- Is there a stuffed animal or other “security object” that can go freely back and forth with the child?
- Does the child need or want help packing?
- If driving to the other parent's, is there something calming you can do in the vehicle, like listen to an audio book or certain music?
- How does your child want to say goodbye to you? A hug? A funny phrase? A secret handshake?
- When it's time to pick up your child, how does your child want to be greeted?
- At pick up, is there anything the child needs for the ride home? A snack or drink? A cozy blanket? A quiet ride without questions? Or lots of discussion and catching up?

Be respectful: When you are all together during the exchange, keep communication between you and the other parent respectful -- including body language. Being respectful also includes being on time.

Other Resources

Finally, remember you can always access your local library for books, and media. If using your library catalogue, you can search for key words such as “divorce” and “coparenting.” Look on the internet and community bulletin boards for local support groups and services for families experiencing divorce and separation.

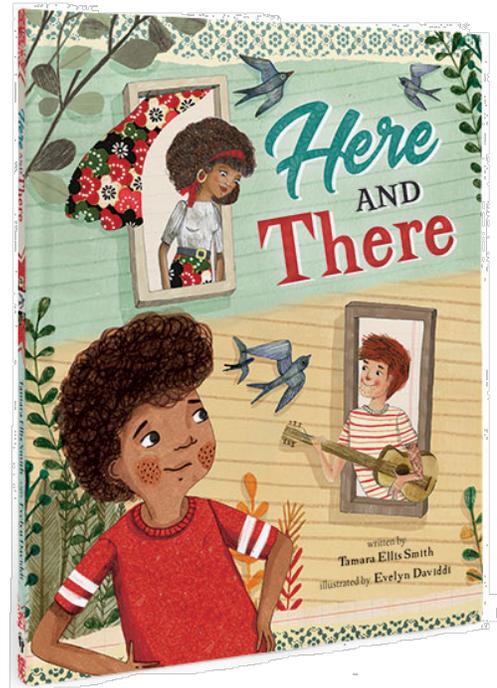


Book Discussion: Here and There

Here and There

By Tamara Ellis Smith,
Illustrated by Evelyn Daviddi
Published by Barefoot Books

This gentle story follows Ivan as he adjusts to the separation of his parents and from going from "Here" to "There" to spend time with each of them. Although this is a difficult transition for Ivan, the book reinforces that home can be both "Here" and "There" when both parents are attentive and loving. After observing Ivan's behavior changes, Ivan's mother and father each engage Ivan in activities that make him feel more connected to them, to himself, and to his two homes.



The Healing Library Parent Guide offers information on your child's adjustment period, and the Activities in the notebook and backpack offer book-themed activities to allow you to engage your child in guided play. This guide, however, helps you explore separation, divorce, and adjustment through the lens of Ivan's experiences in the book.

Reading **Here and There** (Barefoot Books) with your child will be helpful whether your family is experiencing a separation or a divorce, but will be most helpful after that decision has been announced. The book could be beneficial in explaining future living arrangements or negotiating the adjustment of the your child's current homes both "Here" and "There."

You and your child may want to read the book one or two times together before using it as a topic of discussion. What's important is talking together, not forcing a conversation or expecting that reading the book will explain everything your child needs. You are what your child needs. The book and this guide are simply a starting point for crucial conversations.

Below are some helpful notes you can use or paraphrase when reading the book together. *If the note is written in italics it is for you to read and potentially use to observe a behavior in your child.* If the note is written in "quotations," it is a statement or question you could address to your child. Wherever there is a " _____," you may insert the name of your co-parent. There's no need to use all the notes, just use what feels natural or most beneficial for your family.

If you would like to keep this guide when you return the kit to the library, you are welcome to do so.

Discussion

Pages 1 & 2 "Like the birds he loved..."

Ivan is very curious about birds. While birds may not be your child's fascination, observing birds together or "birding" is one activity that could help your child discover connections between their "Here" and "There." Refer to the Birding Here and There activity guide for ideas on how to connect with your child through observing and learning more about birds.

"Ivan knows a lot about the way different birds sing! Would you like to listen to some of these songs together?"

Ivan is shown in the home he grew up in on these pages. He's feeling relaxed and comfortable and is engaging in a favorite pastime. Does your child have a favorite pastime they love to do where they grew up?

"What's something you love to do at our home? Can you also do that at _____'s home?"

Your child may not be able to imagine doing this activity at your co-parent's home. Being positive and brainstorming ways to make the activity possible will help them during this early adjustment phase.

Pages 3 & 4 "Ivan wanted to stay here..."

Ivan is about to go to his dad's new home. Observe how Ivan's body language and facial expression both change. Consider pointing this out to your child and talking to your child about their own feelings regarding your co-parent's home.

"Ivan looks different on this page. How do you think he's feeling?"

Your child's answer may be brief, or they may want to talk about this in more detail. Some children will even note how they feel going to the other parent's home. This can be challenging for some parents to hear, whether the child has positive or negative things to say about it. If you're able, listen to your child's response and carry on with the book and discussion guide. You can return to any discussion points later as needed.

Pages 5 - 8 "When he got there..." "While he was There, Ivan didn't drum..."

The lack of swooping, singing birds on these pages is symbolic of Ivan's lack of movement, singing, and animated conversation. Your child's own body language can help you understand what they need. If they appear still but are able to talk, you can continue your conversation. If they appear "checked out," however, it's probably a good time to take a break and care for them. To learn more about body language, take a look at the Parents Guide in this kit.

"Ivan is happy to see his Dad, but he is also frowning, still, and quiet. Do you ever feel a little sad or uncomfortable when you first arrive at _____ or this place?"

"Moving between our two homes is very stressful, I know. Let's think of some things we can do to make it feel a little more comfortable."

Look at the "Drop-offs and Pick-ups" section of the Parent's Guide for ideas on making the transition from one house to the other easier

Pages 9 & 10 "Ivan roosted all by himself..."

These pages describe Ivan trying to find a place in his father's new home that feels comfortable. Does your child have a space in their new home that feels like their own yet? Can you coordinate with your co-parent to create such a space together in advance of their first visit?

"What is your favorite place to hang out at _____'s home? What makes it the best part of their home? Is there anything in our home you think would help make your new home more comfortable?"

When Ivan goes outside, his body language shows he feels more comfortable. Even though he doesn't engage with the birds he loves, Ivan seems more relaxed now that they're around. This page can be a good place to start a conversation about your child beginning to feel more comfortable in their new home.

"Look at Ivan's face. Is his mood changing? I wonder why? Could it be seeing the birds that he loves?"

Your child's answer may be brief, or they may want to talk about this in more detail. Some children will even note how they feel going to the other parent's home. This can be challenging for some parents to hear, whether the child has positive or negative things to say about it. If you're able, listen to your child's response and carry on with the book and discussion guide. You can return to any discussion points later as needed.

A reminder: If your child cries when talking about any of this, you can reassure them by saying something like, "It's okay to cry, especially when you're sad. You may feel sad for a little while or a long time. Both are okay, and if you need hugs I'm here for you." For more ways to talk to children about your separation or divorce, check out the Parent's Guide in this kit.

Page 11 & 12 "Dad was sitting on the porch..."

If you're the parent who is in a new home, consider things you did at your old home that you can integrate into life in the new home. Having a hard time figuring out what to do? Ask your child!

"I like how the dad is playing with Ivan at their new home the way they did at their old home! What's something we can do together that we used to do at our old home?"

In addition to your own creative ideas, you might also consider one of the activities in this kit.

Pages 13 & 14 "Ivan couldn't be still..."

Ivan's happiness on these pages has to do with how he feels when he's bonding with his parents through play. As a parent, you can provide this kind of comfort to your child by engaging in activities with them and letting them know how loved they are despite your separation or divorce from your co-parent. Reassuring your child that these things will always happen no matter where you live may provide them with a sense of comfort.

"There are things you and I will do together no matter where we live that will always make me feel happy. What are things we do together that make you happy?"

Pages 15 -16 "I like that..."

The dad describes starting the song at one home and finishing at the other. Your child can also bring projects from one home to the other to work on. A journal is something your child can work on in both places. Instructions and materials are available in the Activities Guide to make a journal about "Here" and "There" with your child.

"Ivan discovers that his Dad is writing songs. Is there something surprising you discovered about me or _____ when we separated?"

This would be a great time to pull out the ukulele and play! It doesn't matter if you know a song or just want to strum and be silly!

"Look! Ivan has bird seed in his pockets! That's unique! Do you have anything unique in your pockets that we could write a song about?"

Pages 17 -18 "Ivan couldn't be quiet..."

On this page, you can see the backpack and books that Ivan has brought from "Here" to "There." Reading and writing are great tools to bridge the divide between two homes. In the Parent's Guide there are ideas about reading together and about journaling.

"Do you see the books Ivan brought with him from his mom's home to his dad's home? We can make a book you bring to each of our homes if you like!"

"What are you reading right now? Do you like it? Should I read it too? Maybe I can read it while you are at _____'s home and we can talk about it when you come back."

If you look closely, you will see things from their old home that dad has moved to his new home. For example, there is a plant pot on the table that matches plant pots at mom's house. Talking about the moving process as well as what's it's like to pack or unpack can help normalize the transition.

"What do you think Ivan's dad unpacked first? What do people usually unpack first when they move?"

"Is it exciting or hard to see things from one house appear in another?"

Pages 19 -20 "Caw caw..."

The last page of this book lists the various bird calls Ivan is singing and the birds that make them. In the Activities Guide of this kit you can find web resources where you can listen to these bird songs or find the songs of birds that live where you do!

"Ivan knows so much about bird calls! Would you like to listen to what some of these bird calls sound like in nature? Would you like to find out what bird calls there are where we live?"

Pages 21 & 22 "Ivan sang and swung..."

Saying goodbye can feel especially emotional during the early stages of your separation or divorce. The Parent Guide has some tips for easing the transition between homes for your child that will assist you in providing them with the care they need in the section labeled Drop-offs and Pick-ups. Some suggestions include asking your child if they prefer to chat about their experience when leaving one home or instead prefer to share some quiet time. Would a snack or drink be a good idea for your child? Perhaps packing would be easier if it was something your child did with a parent instead of alone. These pages can be used to discuss a plan with your child.

"Do you think this goodbye is hard for Ivan? Do you think it is hard for his Dad? I know it is hard for me when you leave, but I am also happy that you get time with _____. It is not easy, but we both love you so much."

"Sometimes you might feel sad like Ivan when we say goodbye to one another, but that's normal. If you want, we can figure out ways to make our goodbyes easier together." (*Offer suggestions from the Drop-offs and Pick-ups section here*)

If your homes are far apart now, there are suggestions for staying connected in the Parent Guide. Those suggestions include regularly scheduled communication, shared journals, snail mail, and other ideas. Sometimes even if your homes aren't far apart these strategies can be beneficial. These pages can also be used to discuss communication strategies.

"Would you like to think of ways we can spend time together even if we're apart? I think it might help us miss one another less."

Pages 23 - 26 "Ivan was glad to see Mama..." "Ivan perched..."

Back at mom's home, Ivan appears to feel sad or out of place again. This response is completely normal. The transition from one parent's home to the other can be tiring physically and emotionally. However, including your child in creating a "transition routine" can be helpful for all involved. Ask your child what you can do to help the transition when he or she returns to your home. Some children may want quiet time in their room to unpack and settle in. Other kids may desire an activity with the parent or time to go out and play. This is a great opportunity to include your child in a plan for something predictable and nurturing in transitioning back to your place with as much ease as possible.

"Ivan seems sad again. What is he missing? Do you miss _____ when you are here?"

"I know there are things about spending time with _____ that are very special for both of you. It's okay to miss _____ and the things you do together. I want our home to be filled with happiness and special things for you too. What are some special things we can do together?"

On page 23 we see that the cups at Ivan's mom's home are the same as the cups at Ivan's dad's home. If you have a collection of items (such as cups) that your child is accustomed to, consider having part of the collection at each home. Small details like this can make a child feel more at home no matter where they're staying.

Pages 27 - 30 "Then he heard a falcon..." "Mama heard it too..."

Ivan's mother is happy when Ivan remembers the song he created at his dad's home. Despite what's going on between her and Ivan's dad, she encourages Ivan and dances along in order to let him feel joy. If you ever feeling challenged supporting your child's relationship with the co-parent, remember there are resources to help you through: talk to loved ones; utilize the resources at your community library (there are multiple books on co-parenting to check out); use the internet to collect helpful advice from experts on co-parenting; and/or join a local support group.

"What makes Ivan happy again? How does Ivan's happiness make his Mama feel?"

"You never need to hide that you have had a good time at _____'s house. You never have to hide your sadness either. If you want to keep your time there private, that is okay, but you will not make me jealous or sad by sharing things with me."

If this kit is traveling between homes like Ivan's own backpack, your family might consider writing a song together between both of your homes or just playing with the ukulele in each place, letting your child lead the activity of music making.

Further Reading

If your child connects with this book, it is available in paperback and might be useful to have for your child's shelf both "Here" and "There."

For other age-appropriate books on this topic, talk with your local librarian.



Healing Activity: Here and There Journal

Adjusting to new living arrangements after a separation/divorce takes time. Some children adjust more quickly than others, and it's important to honor each child's pace and experience.

In the picture book **Here and There** (Barefoot Books), Ivan is in this adjustment period, learning to be himself in the "Here" and "There" of his parents' apartments. As children acclimate to the "new normal," it can be helpful for children to explore the similarities and differences of their own "Here" and "There." Journaling is one way to explore this.



A Here and There Journal with suggested writing prompts can encourage children to think about and explore their own "Here" and "There" experience. Prompts are questions that your child can answer, as well as incomplete sentences the child can finish. These prompts encourage thoughts and reflection about what their new living arrangements entail— i.e., how their homes are similar and how they are different, what they look forward to at each place and what they don't look forward to, and what the house rules are at one place compared to the other, etc.

Talk with your child and co-parent about the journal traveling between "Here" and "There."

Making a Simple Journal

If the backpack does not contain a blank notebook or if you simply want to make a journal with your child, use the Journal Supplies in this kit to:

- Cut five 8.5 x 11" sheets of paper in half to create the ten pages that will go inside your journal. Which way should you cut? Hold the paper vertically, and cut along the horizontal center line.

- Fold the piece of card stock in half. Which way should you fold? Hold the paper vertically, and fold along the center horizontal line
- If you would like, cut out the Here and There Journal Label and glue it to the front.
- Staple your ten pages inside the cover.
- A journal can be so much more than just writing! Feel free to embellish it, add borders, or follow other creative ideas your child may have.

Pasting in the Prompts

On the next page you will see the journal prompts. Each journal prompt is printed twice to allow a prompt for “Here” and an identical prompt for “There.” The child can choose which prompts to include in their journals. The child cuts out the desired prompts and then glues them into the journal. If they choose, they can put the same prompt on facing pages of their journal so they can easily compare the responses at a glance. Or, they can choose to glue the prompts in another way.

Journaling

Journaling should not be something you “assign” to your child. Your child should feel comfortable to add to that journal with you beside them or in their own private time. Consider making yourself a journal as well. You two can set aside some quiet time to write together. You might even share certain things you have written or drawn. Encourage your child to go beyond the writing prompts and use the journal to “think” on the page.

Shared Journals are a great tool to communicate with a parent whom the child does not see frequently. See the “When/If One Parent is Moving Far Away” in the Parent Guide.

Drawing

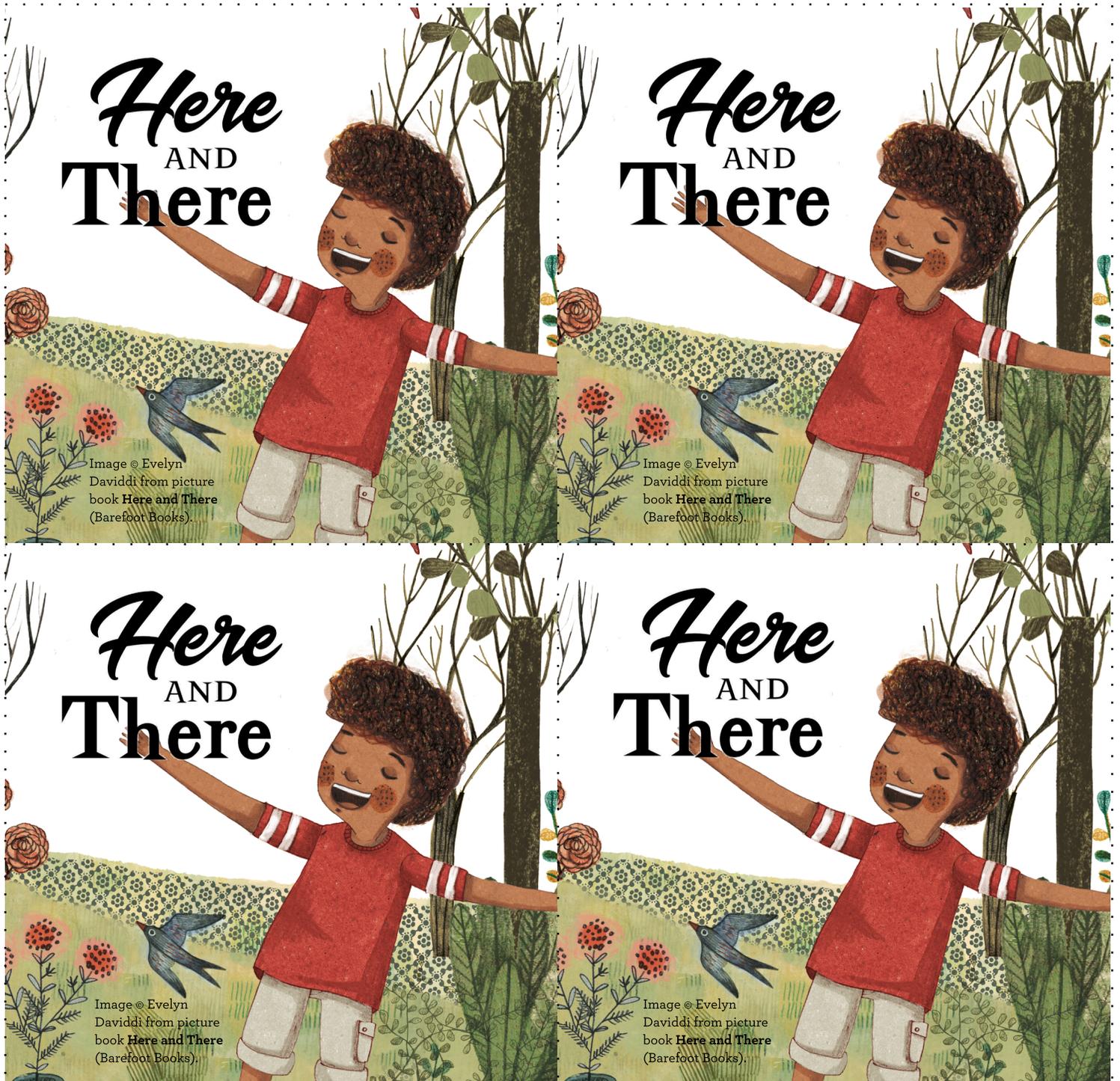
Keep in mind that drawing can be a helpful way for children to express themselves when they might be uncomfortable or may be too young to use only words to express themselves.

Privacy

Talk to your child ahead of time about their journal and privacy. Do they want their Here and There Journal to be private, or will they want to share it with a parent, counselor, or other person? If they ask for their journal to be private, respect their privacy. The Here and There Journal is meant to be a neutral place for children to explore their lives after a separation/divorce. If the journal travels between “Here” and “There,” make sure that your co-parent is also aware of the privacy decision.

Healing Activity: Here and There Journal Labels

Cut out one of these labels to transform any notebook or journal into a journal about "Here" and "There" and this period of adjustment from separation and divorce.



Healing Activity: Here and There Journal Prompts

Other people that live here are...

Pets that live here are...

The rules here are...

My favorite foods I eat here are...

My favorite room here is...

Here's a map I drew of this place:

My favorite smells here are...

Some of the sounds here are...

Things I like here:

Things I don't like here:

Sometimes I miss this when I'm here:

Some things about the neighborhood:

What I see when I look out the window:

Things I enjoy doing here:

I have seen these birds here:

Things that feel the same (or mostly the same) whether I'm here or there:

Other people that live here are...

Pets that live here are...

The rules here are...

My favorite foods I eat here are...

My favorite room here is...

Here's a map I drew of this place:

My favorite smells here are...

Some of the sounds here are...

Things I like here:

Things I don't like here:

Sometimes I miss this when I'm here:

Some things about the neighborhood:

What I see when I look out the window:

Things I enjoy doing here:

I have seen these birds here:



Healing Activity: Birding Here & There

In the picture book **Here and There** (Barefoot Books), Ivan is a birder (someone who is curious about birds). He knows a lot about their songs and their appearance, and he carries a pocketful of bird seed to feed them.

When Ivan is first moving between his mother and his father's two apartments, he feels sad and disoriented. It is the appearance of the birds that connects Ivan to the two places. That is the challenge of any child moving between two places -- to feel at home in each. While birds may not be your child's fascination, observing birds together or "birding" is one activity that could help your child discover connections between their "Here" and "There."



Pocketful of Bird Seed

Look further in this activity guide for a paper craft that allows you and your child to keep a pocketful of bird seed like Ivan. Somewhere in the backpack, you should also find some bird seed to fill your packets and pockets.

Here and There Bird Song

To help identify bird song, turn to the back of the book or the sheet in this guide that includes Ivan's unique song composed of bird song.

Birds Near You

The birds you will see in your neighborhood or in more wild places will differ depending on where you live and what time of year it is. Ask your librarian for books and local resources. If you have access to the internet, here are some great resources:

The Audubon Guide to North American Birds website lets you search for birds by name, region, or taxonomy (group). <https://www.audubon.org/bird-guide>

There's a free app called Merlin created by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to assist you with bird identification. You can answer simple questions to see a list of potential birds in your area or submit pictures of the bird you saw to identify birds in your area.

<http://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>

Project FeederWatch has free posters of the most common birds found at bird feeders in winter in North America. You may print them out and have them for reference. They also have a free poster of the most common hummingbirds in North America.

<https://feederwatch.org/learn/identifying-birds/#download-feederwatch-posters>

Birdsong

Often you will hear a bird before you see it. Learning birds by the songs they sing can be very satisfying and make you more attuned to your environment. In addition to the guide in the back of **Here and There** (Barefoot Books), here are some online resources:

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has a search engine where you can enter the type of bird you're looking for and listen to its song. <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/search>

In addition, you can also check out their section all about how to listen to birdsong to hear differences in rhythm, tone, pitch, and repetition:

<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/page.aspx%3Fpid%3D1059>

Feeding Birds

You may find that feeding and attracting birds to your apartment or house is very appealing. While you may see fancy bird feeders and so many varieties of seed in stores, feeding birds does not need to be complicated or expensive. Ask your librarian or search online for kids' crafts to make bird feeders with everything from toilet paper rolls to lumber.

For more information on different birdseeds and what types of birds they attract, check out this guide from Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/types-of-bird-seed-a-quick-guide/>

Urban Birding

When most people think of birding, they picture walking in the woods with a pair of binoculars in one hand and a guide book in the other. However, as our cities have grown and changed to house us humans, many birds have adapted to also create their homes there. "Urban birding" is birdwatching in cities and other urban locations!

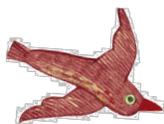
Celebrate Urban Birds is run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and is designed to help birders in urban locations identify birds, learn about conservation, and also contribute their sightings to help Cornell's research.

<https://celebrateurbanbirds.org/>

Learn More

Want to read more? Borrow these or other titles from your local library!

- Kaufman, Kenn. **Birds of North America**. New York: Houghton Mifflin. 2000
- Sibley, David Allen. **The Sibley Guide to Birds**. Alfred A. Knopf. 2000
- Stokes, Don and Lillian. **Beginner's Guide to Birds**. Little, Brown, and Company. 1996



To learn bird calls, check out the picture book *Here and There* by Tamara Ellis Smith & illustrated by Evelyn Davididi (Barefoot Books).

Pocketful of Birdseed (for Here and There)

In the picture book *Here and There* (Barefoot Books), Ivan likes to perch in the pear tree, reach into his pocket, and scatter birdseed. You can carry birdseed in your pocket with this cut-and-fold packet.



READERS!
Explore ways to help the birds at Audubon.org.



You Will Need:

- 1) Kids' Scissors
- 2) Glue Stick
- 3) Birdseed
- 4) Paperclip

Directions:

- 1) Cut the packet out on the solid line
- 2) Fold tab 1 on the dashed line toward the blank side
- 3) Fold tabs 2 and 3 toward the blank side
- 4) Dab glue where tabs 1 and 2 touch
- 5) Run glue along the top of tabs 1 and 2
- 6) Press tab 3 on top of the glue on tabs 1 and 2
- 7) Once dry, fill your packet with birdseed
- 8) Paperclip the top shut.

2



Barefoot Books
step inside a story

What is the best way to feed the birds in your area? Find information at Audubon.org.





Healing Activity: Making Music Here & There

In the picture book **Here and There** (Barefoot Books), Ivan is a very musical child. Despite feeling sad when he is at his father's new house, he can't resist one of the songs his dad plays on the guitar. Much like Ivan's backpack filled with items he can take between his parent's two homes, a song is something you can also have with you at all times. We can hum a familiar tune to comfort ourselves, or we can sing a song together to share in our happiness (or sadness).

While we would have liked to include a guitar in this kit for you and your child to make music on, a guitar would simply not fit. What you see in the backpack is a ukulele, or "uke" for short.

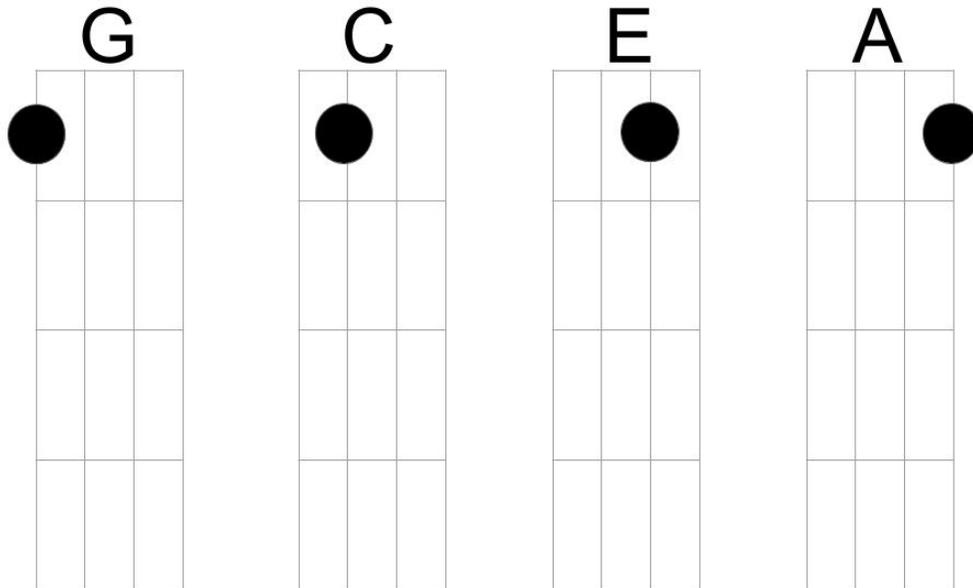
The ukulele is a uniquely accessible instrument. It can be strummed aimlessly to create a happy tune with almost no need to learn chords. You could start by singing the bird sound song that Ivan invented. Ivan's lyrics are included on the next page. Use that song to inspire you to make up a song together about something your child loves as much as Ivan loves birds. Don't worry too much about the technical aspects of the song, just have fun and make it your own!

If you or your child want to get a little more serious about tuning the instrument and learning some chords, here are some starting points.

Tuning

Playing a ukulele easy--and so is tuning one! Tuners are the little knobs on the top of the ukulele. There are two on the left side and two on the right side. Starting with the tuner that is attached to the string on the left, you'll tune the ukulele to the following notes: G, then C, then E, then A. This is the standard tuning for a ukulele.

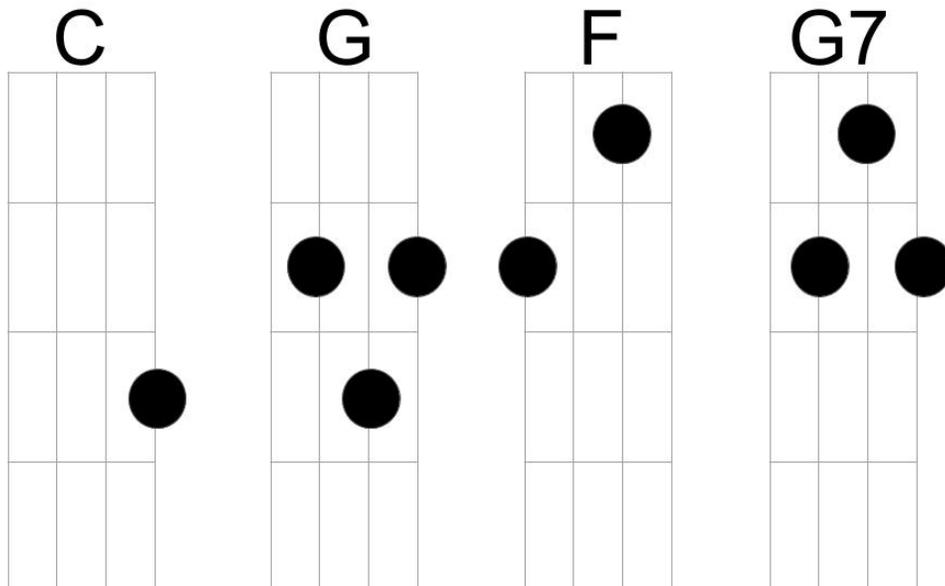




Look for a simple ukulele book at the library to help with tuning or use the online tuner and guide at: <https://ukuguides.com/maintenance/how-to-properly-tune-your-ukulele/>

Chords

Julia Frederick, the Youth Services Librarian at Deerfield Public Library, Deerfield, IL, plays the ukulele at work! She recommends playing around on the ukulele to get a feel for all the fun this happy little instrument holds. In addition to strumming the ukulele once it's in tune, here are a few easy chords she suggests you try out as well:



Add Percussion

Feeling extra creative? In addition to playing your ukulele, you can also knock gently on it to create some percussion to go with your song.

If one of you is playing the ukulele, the other can play percussion by clapping, knocking on a surface, or even shaking dried beans or nuts in a jar.

Learn More

Want more? Ask your local library what titles they have for you to borrow!



SONG

Caw Caw!

Per-chik-o-ree!

Shriek Shriek Drum

Feebee Feebee!

Cheer-up, Cheer-up

Cheer Cheer Cheer!

Tika-swee, Tika-swee.

Here Here Here!

Hip-hip-hurrah.

Zay-zoo-zee-zare.

Pett-zuh. Peet-zuh.

There! There! There!

BIRD

American Crow

American Goldfinch

Falcon/Red-bellied Woodpecker

Eastern Phoebe

American Robin

Northern Cardinal

Tennessee Warbler

Indigo Bunting

King Rail

Black-throated Green Warbler

Acadian Flycatcher

Ivan the Boy

SING

Caw Caw!

Per-chik-o-ree!

Shriek Shriek Drum

Feebee Feebee!

Cheer-up, Cheer-up

Cheer Cheer Cheer!

Tika-swee, Tika-swee.

Here Here Here!

Hip-hip-hurrah.

Zay-zoo-zee-zare.

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Indigo Bunting

King Rail

Black-throated Green Warbler

Acadian Flycatcher

Ivan the Boy

Learn more about these birds or the birds in your area by exploring Audubon.org or books from your local library. Learn more about "Ivan the Boy" by reading the picture book **Here and There** by Tamara Ellis Smith and illustrated by Evelyn Daviddi (Barefoot Books). Image © Evelyn Daviddi.

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